

U.S. Department of Education
2016 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [] Title I [] Charter [] Magnet [] Choice

Name of Principal Dr. Brian Ellis

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name York Suburban Senior High School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1800 Hollywood Drive

(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City York State PA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 17403-4256

County York

Telephone (717) 885-1270 Fax (717) 885-1271

Web site/URL http://www.yssd.org/yshs E-mail bellis@yssd.org

Twitter Handle https://twitter.com/YorkSuburbanHS Facebook Page https://www.facebook.com/pages/York-Suburban-School-District/245269942178459 Google+ _____

YouTube/URL _____ Blog _____ Other Social Media Link _____

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent*Dr. Michele Merkle E-mail smerkle@yssd.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name York Suburban School District Tel. (717) 885-1210

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

Name of School Board President/Chairperson Mrs. Lynne Leopold-Sharp
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date _____

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

Part I – Eligibility Certification

The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The public school has met their state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) using the most recent accountability results available for the year prior to nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, a public school must meet the state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) for the year in which they are nominated (2015-2016) and be certified by the state representative. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2010 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, or 2015.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2015-2016) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 4 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 6 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
 - Suburban with characteristics typical of an urban area
 - Suburban
 - Small city or town in a rural area
 - Rural
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2015 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	130	124	254
10	112	111	223
11	96	82	178
12 or higher	104	107	211
Total Students	442	424	866

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 5 % Asian
 - 8 % Black or African American
 - 6 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 76 % White
 - 3 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2014 – 2015 school year: 10%

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	39
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	46
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	85
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	863
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.098
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	10

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 2 %
13 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Spanish, Vietnamese, Arabic, Khmer

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 24 %
Total number students who qualify: 205

8. Students receiving special education services: 9 %
74 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <u>1</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>9</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>53</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>8</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>1</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>1</u> Mental Retardation | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |
| <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities | <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 4
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	3
Classroom teachers	41
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	22
Paraprofessionals	7
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	4

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 21:1

12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	95%	96%
High school graduation rate	93%	88%	96%	91%	92%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2015.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	215
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	75%
Enrolled in a community college	4%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	2%
Found employment	16%
Joined the military or other public service	3%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.
Yes No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school's mission or vision statement.

York Suburban School District educates, challenges, and prepares students to shape the future.

16. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

PART III – SUMMARY

Our school community is exemplified by our district tag-line: A Community of Encouragement. A Culture of Excellence. We are fortunate to serve a community that supports and values academics and school activities, and we have developed a culture in which students are motivated to excel in the classroom and all other aspects of their school lives.

Like many “inner-ring” suburbs, we have seen our population change and become increasingly diverse. Our minority and economically disadvantaged populations have both grown to one-quarter of our student body. While the population has changed, the value our families place on education has not. We continue to have three-quarters of our students move onto four-year colleges and half of the remaining quarter attend some type of further schooling.

Our district has a rich tradition of academic excellence. Since its formation 60 years ago, York Suburban has been noted for its academic excellence. Our traditions embody the pride our community has for the school. We regularly talk about being “YSProud” and chant “We Are YS” at student and faculty functions. Our students and staff take great pride in the progress that is made from the day our students enter our primary schools to the day they leave as graduates, and that K-12 focus permeates all that we do. Our core traditions are not merely high school traditions, they are district-wide. At graduation, our seniors begin the ceremony by walking through a “human tunnel” made up of their teachers from elementary to high school. Our teachers clap, cheer, and give hugs to students. Each year at homecoming, our K-12 school community converges on the high school campus. Each building walks together in a parade around the local neighborhood, led by the high school and middle school bands. The parade ends at our baseball field where all the students and families sit on our big hill for a pep rally and bonfire, and students ranging from Kindergartners through Seniors do the “Trojan Rumble” together. Additionally, our high school students regularly interact with their elementary and middle school counterparts. They serve as assistants in classrooms, participate in collaborative activities, and our National Honor Society hosts Trick or Treat and Egg Roll events for our youngest students.

The value placed upon education is exemplified in our Annual Academic Awards ceremony. Each May, our best students are invited to a banquet to celebrate their academic accomplishments during the school year. For each grade level, we recognize the top ten percent of students by grade point average and the five students in each grade who raised their grade point averages the most from the previous year. Additionally, each department selects four students, one for each grade, as the most outstanding students in their respective disciplines. All of these students and their families enjoy a social hour with light appetizers prior to the students being recognized in a formal ceremony. Our students’ well-roundedness is additionally recognized through our multiple honor societies including chapters of the National Honor Society, the National English Honor Society, the National Art Honor Society, the Music Honor Society (Tri-M), the National Spanish Honor Society (La Sociedad Honoraria Hispanica), the National German Honor Society (Delta Epsilon Phi), and the National French Honor Society (Societe Honoraire de Francais). Beyond mere recognition, students in these societies continue to exemplify the organizational tenets by being leaders in the school and providing a variety of services to the school and larger community.

But more important than external programs and practices that influence school culture, our success is built in the classroom. Our teachers ensure our curriculum is properly aligned while building engaging lessons that continually challenge our students to think critically, to communicate in a variety of ways, and to connect their learning with the strong scaffolds built by their previous teachers. Our teachers provide detailed individual feedback that helps students grow as learners and make progress towards academic excellence. For the most important assignments, students must meet proficiency requirements or they must revise and resubmit. Teachers maintain a feedback loop with those students so that they continue to grow and make progress towards those expectations. Students can also receive supplemental assistance in our Trojan Learning Center which provides students with tutoring and homework support, as well as academic monitoring and skill development. Beyond academics, our school and teachers are committed to providing students with additional opportunities to learn intangible skills such as teamwork, leadership, dedication, and perseverance. Our high school offers 15 varsity sports and 44 other student activities. Our teachers

reinforce the value of these activities, and have additional opportunities to interact with students, as 65 percent of our teachers coach at least one sport or advise one activity.

From our traditions, to our classroom instruction, to our extracurricular activities, our school is the Community of Encouragement that provides all our students the opportunity to succeed. Through this encouragement and our school's history of success, we have fostered a Culture of Excellence that continues to drive our students and staff to be the best they can possibly be.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

While the curriculum of each content area is independently developed, each is based upon the Pennsylvania Core Standards and a number of common building-wide priorities. These common priorities are the writing process, higher order thinking, and college and career readiness.

Across all courses, there is significant attention paid to the writing process. All students are expected to write in all classes to further develop writing skills and to provide a means for teachers to more objectively measure student thinking and understanding. For consistency, teachers expect students to use the Jane Schaffer writing process and our school has developed a “No Excuses Grammar List”. The list includes basic grammatical principles that students must follow no matter the purpose of their writing.

Higher order thinking is another common theme. Our students regularly engage in cognitively demanding activities and teachers measure the activities using Webb’s Depth of Knowledge. Teachers design lessons that frequently engage students in Level Four (Extended Thinking) and Level Three (Strategic Thinking) tasks, while limiting the frequency of Level One (Recall) tasks. Our long-time emphasis on higher order thinking has been beneficial as we have shifted to the more rigorous Pennsylvania Core Standards and Keystone Assessments.

College and career readiness is the third common theme. In ninth grade English, all students research a career of interest and write a related research paper. In twelfth grade English, non-college bound students research and complete activities centered around career selection and workforce preparations. Counselors push into courses throughout students’ careers to teach the college and career exploration process. Within departments, teachers discuss careers and reference alumni employed in related fields. Our students also have access to internship and community service opportunities to experience the world beyond the high school, while college readiness skills are well-developed through our rigorous coursework.

Beyond the common themes of writing, higher order thinking, and college and career readiness, our departments engage in cycles of curriculum development where they research and embed best practices. This ongoing process ensures that our students are always exposed to the most relevant content and most effective instruction.

The English department emphasizes communication, both oral and verbal. Each year students complete six to eight required writing assignments along with required oral presentations. At each grade level, students must complete a significant research paper at a proficient level of competency. If inadequate, students must revise and resubmit their work until proficiency is achieved. To meet varied student needs and interests, the English department offers three levels of traditional English instruction at each grade level. The most rigorous offering, our senior English seminar, is considered a 200 level course through our College in the High School relationship. Additionally, our department offers popular electives such as Myths and Legends, Oral Communication, and Creative Writing for students to supplement their traditional English instruction.

Our mathematics curriculum is traditional in nature with a significant emphasis on non-calculator activities. This focus helps develop the students’ conceptual understanding of mathematics. The department meets the variety of students’ mathematical needs by providing both remedial and acceleration programs that address a traditional Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2, and Pre-Calculus sequence. The acceleration program results in 25 percent of our students taking Calculus and 5 percent taking Calculus 2 while the remedial programs provide students with specially designed instruction to ensure students graduate with fundamental understandings of Algebra and Geometry. The department also offers introductory and Advanced Placement level Statistics and Computer Science.

In Science, the department focus is on inquiry, lab activities, and project-based learning. Each course includes regular laboratory tasks and projects where students discover or confirm scientific principles. All students complete a core curriculum of Biology, Chemistry, and Physics but also have the opportunity to participate in Advanced Placement Physics, Chemistry, and Biology as well as other elective offerings in Anatomy and Physiology, Astronomy, and Biotechnology.

Social Studies emphasizes skill and conceptual understanding over specific content. Students regularly justify positions and engage in debate to develop higher order thinking skills. Furthermore, the department emphasizes analysis of primary and secondary source documents. All students complete a core curriculum including American History, Global Studies, Civics, and Economics, and also have the opportunity to participate in Advanced Placement U.S. Government, Psychology, U.S. History, and European History as well as other elective offerings in Sociology, Cultural Diversity, and Military History.

Our core courses are tiered with three levels so we may address the variety of student learning needs and styles. In ninth grade, our general level English and Biology classes include additional time, and our Algebra 1 course is divided over two years so these students have greater opportunities to master content and develop skills. We require students to take our supplemental Writing Strategies and Academic Literacy courses to assist those who lack the literacy skills necessary to be successful in our high school. On the opposite end of the spectrum, our students who excel are challenged by Honors and Advanced Placement level courses where they go into greater depth with the content and are asked to more regularly engage in the most cognitively demanding activities.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Our “other curriculum areas” are critical to our students’ development. Our high school requires students to accumulate nine elective credits along with four years of physical and health education. While a small portion of students complete their electives in core areas, the vast majority of our students take multiple elective offerings at all grade levels.

While Foreign Language is considered an “other curriculum area” by this application, it is considered a core class in our high school. Almost every student engages in Foreign Language even though it is not required. This year, 58 percent of students are taking a Foreign Language, 29 percent of our senior class is taking the fourth or fifth level of a language, and 80 percent of our seniors will graduate with at least two years of a Foreign Language. Students also regularly participate in our other elective areas. This school year, 38 percent of students are taking classes in Visual Arts, 30 percent in Family and Consumer Science, 24 percent in Music, 23 percent in Business, and 13 percent in Applied Technology. When considered collectively, 87 percent of students are taking one or more elective courses this school year.

Our Foreign Language department offers three languages: French, German, and Spanish. The Applied Technology department offers production technology and engineering courses. Art offers ceramics, drawing, painting, photography, and digital design. Business offers accounting, economics, management, and web design. Our Physical Education program requires four years of instruction and an additional semester of health instruction. The program emphasizes lifelong fitness and students participate in a variety of activities including jogging, running, aerobics, strength training, and various games. Family and Consumer Science offers numerous foods courses and career focused programs such as child development and creative design. Our music program offers band, chorus, and orchestra ensembles along with guitar and music theory instruction.

Like our core areas, the “other curriculum areas” also incorporate the writing process, higher order thinking, and college and career readiness, but often in a more project-based and hands-on environment. Each area has required writing assignments such as artist statements, article reviews and analysis, and project summaries, while most every course has a significant culminating project that requires strategic and/or extended thinking. The “other areas” emphasize career readiness as they host practitioners such as visiting artists and tradespersons to demonstrate skills and to interact with students in career-like environments. These activities complement core area instruction and are essential in developing the key skills and knowledge that transcend individual content areas.

Within each content area, the teachers use specific strategies to develop student skills. The Foreign Language department emphasizes the fundamental four language skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking and each is incorporated into nearly every lesson. Our Art department utilizes teacher demonstrations, sketchbooks to help students develop and plan their projects, and significant amounts of studio time for students to complete their projects. The Art department also expects students to display their artwork in a public show at the high school and senior art students display their work at a local art gallery. The business department incorporates technology and exploration of real-world business examples to bring more relevance to their work. The Physical Education department emphasizes the importance of monitoring heart rate to maximize fitness benefits while developing lifelong fitness activities. The Applied Technology students develop practical products such as chairs, picture frames, and chess boards to learn woodworking and production skills. The Family and Consumer Science department incorporates teacher demonstration but also frequent student practice in preparing various foods and engaging in real life scenarios.

Beyond the traditional elective areas, special education students have access to specially designed coursework and academic support programs that help them master basic content while also providing individual attention and assistance. Students participate in the support program daily if necessary, and during that time students receive assistance with organization, study skills, and complete coursework and homework under the guidance of support teachers and assistants.

Finally, during their senior year, students have opportunities to engage in learning outside of our school environment. Seniors are encouraged to engage in concurrent enrollment activities at local colleges as well as participating in an internship with a local company or office. This year, 8 percent of our seniors participated in concurrent enrollment while 10 percent of seniors completed internships.

By having a robust and comprehensive “other curriculum area” program to complement our “core” program, our students are exposed to multiple and diverse means to engage in learning and to develop essential academic and life skills.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

The primary instructional method of our teachers is student-centered direct and explicit instruction. While lessons are often teacher led, students are still active participants. Our teachers facilitate this by designing multiple activities for each lesson that provide students with different access points to material. Across the various activities of each lesson, the teachers incorporate multiple methodologies to maximize student engagement. Our core coursework includes three levels: a general level which incorporates additional study skills and strategies that help students across content areas, a college preparatory level that addresses the core content of subjects with increasing levels of rigor over the grade levels, and an honors level that consistently challenges students with the most cognitively demanding and rigorous activities.

While our high levels of student achievement are first and foremost a product of highly effective classroom instruction, we have developed interventions to help keep students on target. Our teachers regularly employ a mastery approach, particularly when students are having difficulty meeting the minimum standards of a course. These students are provided opportunities for retesting or resubmission of assignments so that they can ultimately demonstrate mastery. The teachers provide detailed feedback on the initial submission and throughout the resubmission process to help students master the material.

Beyond the classroom, the Trojan Learning Center was developed to provide supplemental assistance with day-to-day coursework, along with more intensive assistance. The center is led by a full-time staff member who assists students with content and organizational skills while also providing academic monitoring. The students are further supported by at least one additional teaching staff member each period along with National Honor Society students who provide student tutoring. The center remains open after school to provide support to those students who are unable to access it during the day. While the center is always available on a voluntary basis, students are also assigned to the center based upon their past progress. Freshman students are assigned mandatory hours outside of school when they demonstrate consistent difficulty with a class or classes. Each year, more than 40 percent of the freshman class utilizes the center in some fashion, and many students continue to use the center as they move on to higher grade levels.

Through purposefully designed instructional activities, a mastery approach to learning, and supplemental interventions, we are able to meet the diverse needs of students and help them meet our instructional goals.

4. Assessment for Instruction and Learning and Sharing Assessment Results:

While our school keeps standardized assessment in context with the many other measures of learning, our staff strategically utilizes state and national assessment results, along with results from our locally developed common assessments, in their long and short-term planning. In addition to day-to-day planning, our teachers utilize professional development time to analyze results collaboratively.

At the student and class level, our teachers utilize benchmark, formative, and diagnostic assessment results to identify student progress, to inform daily instruction, and to identify students in need of remediation and enrichment. At the course and building levels, our teachers use aggregate results from the Keystone, Advanced Placement, and locally designed common assessments to consider system-wide curricular and instructional modifications.

While our overall student achievement is high, we recognize some achievement gaps. However, we do not focus on demographic group performance. Our total number of non-proficient students is consistently small enough that we can best address the gaps by focusing on the needs of the individual student, rather than his/her demographic group. A 10 percent gap between demographic groups can be closed by helping two or three additional students reach proficiency. Our non-proficient students take specialized coursework and continue to take periodic benchmark and diagnostics assessments that teachers utilize for individualized instructional planning. These efforts consistently result in an additional three to five percent of additional proficient students on the subsequent Keystone examination attempts.

We have maintained our high achievement for many years and we proudly display that when we present our results to parents and the community in our annual report. The report features our Keystone, AP, and SAT results with comparisons to previous years and state or national benchmarks. We continue to be able to share these great reports because our staff is never content with our results. We strive to improve the percentage of students scoring advanced rather than proficient on our state assessments while also striving to help students improve their SAT scores. Our staff utilizes professional development time to review the new SAT format with the goal of aligning our local assessments to its rigor and context. Our staff also reviews our individual student results from the new PSAT to further develop our sophomore and junior courses so that students are prepared for the SAT.

By carefully considering the results of assessments from the student level to the building level, and ensuring our local assessments and instruction are aligned with the content, context, and cognitive demand of the major assessments, we have been able to maintain our high levels of achievement while also striving to help each individual student reach higher levels of mastery.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Our school climate and culture is a product of the value we place on each student as an individual. We strive to provide students with opportunities within and beyond the classroom where they develop their academic talents while also developing the intangible traits that are necessary for future college and career success.

In the classroom, students are engaged through dynamic activities and by dynamic teachers. Teachers expect students to contribute to each lesson and to demonstrate success with the material. And while the teachers expect academic success, the teachers prioritize building positive relationships with and amongst students. They pride themselves on getting to know the students and helping them to develop as individuals. Beyond the classroom, students are provided with numerous privileges when they demonstrate success in school and exhibit appropriate behaviors. These privileges motivate students to maintain high grades, support one another, and to conduct themselves appropriately.

Student service and success is recognized and celebrated. Our lobby features showcases dedicated to the students who engage in thousands of hours of community service and raise tens of thousands of dollars. Another showcase includes the destinations of all our seniors with the students' college of attendance, branch of the military, or future employer noted. Other showcases are dedicated to our finest student art work and students who have earned recognition in their sports or music ensembles. A final showcase features academic accomplishments such as National Merit Recognition and a list of students who have earned Honor Roll every term of their high school careers. Additionally, pictures of students engaged in all aspects of school life line our hallways.

Our teachers are exceptional professionals, not only talented in their areas of expertise and pedagogy, but also in their passion for students and education. While they are provided with resources and curriculum, they are also given the autonomy and freedom to help their students meet their goals. They collaborate and solve problems collectively, and participate in the goal-setting and vision development for the school. Their value was demonstrated on the first teacher day when 300 community members, parents and students, as well as the marching band, turned out to cheer the teachers as they began another school year. Most of all, they are valued by the regular flow of alumni who return to our high school to thank and recognize them for all that they did and how well they were prepared for their college experiences. The value placed upon teachers results in outstanding retention rates. In the last five years, just one staff member out of a staff of 63 teachers has left our high school for another teaching position.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Our school district is fortunate to have a supportive community and highly-engaged families that provides us with resources we can use to further the mission of our school. We have three affiliated community organizations: the York Suburban Dollars for Scholars, who provide assistance to students who continue their education beyond our high school; the York Suburban Education Foundation, whose mission is to provide funding for innovative programs that enhance our school and district; and the York Suburban Communities that Care, which strives to connect our families and students with resources for responsible decision-making. Beyond the direct impact of these programs from funding and the resources they provide, these organizations are run by alumni, parents, and other community leaders who provide invaluable support for our school.

One example of that assistance is our new Impact Foundation. Built on the premise that we have large numbers of students who lack basic human needs: food, clothing, and shelter, our administration approached the Educational Foundation for a grant to begin the organization. The Impact Foundation is a student led nonprofit organization whose mission is to gather funds and resources to meet every student's basic needs so that the student can focus on his/her education. The organization has a student board that is advised by community leaders with experience working on nonprofit boards. The benefit to the school is

two-fold: first and most importantly, we can support students in need. Secondly, the student board members get first-hand experience in running an organization and interacting with members of the community as they solicit funds and resources.

We are also fortunate to have two institutions of higher-learning within our school district boundaries: Pennsylvania State University - York Campus and York College of Pennsylvania. These colleges are open to our seniors who wish to participate in concurrent enrollment. We have opportunities for our faculty to engage with their faculty around content and instruction. We also collaborate on special student teaching programs that provide us with better prepared student teachers while providing those student teachers with more authentic experiences to help their growth. Additionally, we have many local businesses and organizations who welcome our students and provide them with real-world experiences via internships, job shadowing, and community service opportunities.

Our community and families are an important part of our Community of Encouragement. Their support for our school - not just by providing resources, but more importantly, for demonstrating their value for education - is instrumental in our success.

3. Professional Development:

The professional development needs of our high school are identified by the Professional Development Committee, a group made up of teachers and administration. Once the needs are identified, the administration develops a calendar of professional development activities utilizing faculty meetings, department meetings, in-service days, and planned early dismissal/late arrival days. The majority of professional development activities incorporate teacher collaboration. With a general topic identified, teachers gather in small interdisciplinary or departmental groupings to discuss and share effective instructional strategies and how those strategies have impacted their students. Through such collaboration, teachers reflect upon and identify ways to incorporate new ideas into their own lessons.

Our staff is comprised of outstanding teaching and administrative professionals who are eager to share their expertise. What makes them unique is they have the capacity to not only teach students, they can also teach adults. We have staff members who are experts in Instructional Technology, Cognition, Metacognition, Assessment Development, Project-Based Learning, Writing Across the Content Areas, Curriculum Alignment, Assessment Results Analysis, and many other areas as well. Our professional learning is led by our internal experts who can share their own expertise and knowledge within the context of our own school. Most often our teacher experts provide a fifteen to twenty minute demonstration of a concept and then staff are given the opportunity to reflect on how to employ those concepts into their classrooms. Additionally, longer workshops are presented to staff in the summer so that they may examine the concepts in greater depth and have more immersive opportunities with the material.

Beyond the formal professional development planned for all staff members, independent or collaborative professional learning is expected of all staff as part of the supervision process. Every staff member is expected to identify an annual learning target in consultation with his/her supervisor and develop a learning plan for that target. The teachers review professional literature, engage in professional discussions, and implement action research as they develop their targeted capacities. Not only does this personal professional learning benefit our students through the teachers' increased effectiveness, it also reinforces a core premise of our Culture of Excellence - in that all school members are learners. Teachers become role models for students by demonstrating their lifelong professional learning.

By allowing our teaching staff to share their expertise through collaborative sessions and workshops with their colleagues, and also maintaining our culture of continual professional learning, our staff continues to grow their instructional capacity and are better able to meet the needs of our students.

4. School Leadership:

The school's leadership philosophy is based upon the principles of Distributed Leadership and the Continuous Cycle of Improvement. All staff members are expected to contribute to discussions regarding the continuous improvement of our learning environment, while staff leaders regularly work with school administration to develop ideas that emerge from those discussions.

The high school has two leadership teams that meet monthly with the building principal and two assistant principals. One team consists of the chairpersons of each academic department. The second, called the Faculty Council, consists of a volunteer or nominated member of each department. The department chairpersons generally focus on leadership and development of curricular initiatives, while the Faculty Council generally focuses on logistical and management issues. Both groups are important contributors to the building leadership as they are expected to bring ideas for initiatives and contribute to discussions of those ideas. The department chairs and Faculty Council members share ideas in their respective department meetings to continually gather feedback that is later presented at leadership team meetings.

All staff members contribute to an annual goal setting and reflection process. As part of the annual survey, all staff members are asked to reflect on our building's progress towards the established goals and to identify additional topics or areas that should be attended to in the subsequent year. This feedback is organized by administrators and the staff is then asked to prioritize needs. Those highest priorities are discussed by the principals and leadership teams, and overriding goals are formulated for the subsequent year.

One such example of this process is our continuous effort to address struggling students. While this group of students has always been given attention, the staff has identified an increasing level of need. Taking this feedback, the administration developed a two-part goal with plans to identify and address individual students while also exploring more significant programmatic adjustments. The whole staff engaged in multiple small group discussions during the school year to identify and share ideas for addressing these needs. The administration summarized the ideas and brought them to the leadership teams for further discussion and development. Some straightforward ideas, such as changes to our student monitoring process and counselor/administrator meetings, were implemented immediately while others, such as program additions and staffing adjustments, continue to be developed and refined.

By involving the whole staff in visionary and problem-solving tasks and involving a significant portion of the staff in building leadership through our leadership teams, we are able to work cooperatively to continually move our high school forward.

Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The best introduction to the singular practice that explains our success is our district's tagline: A Community of Encouragement. A Culture of Excellence. While there are two principles in our tagline, in practice they are inseparable. Every successful organization has a culture of excellence; however, the means by which an organization reaches that excellence can be very different. At York Suburban we reach that excellence through our Community of Encouragement.

We expect all students to put forth their very best in all that they do both inside and outside of school. Through those expectations, we consistently have students accepted to and attending the nation's best colleges and universities. Our school has relatively few disciplinary incidents. We have numerous teams and individuals who win local and state honors in athletics and music, along with arts programs that are envied by other schools our size. This excellence is a product of our Community of Encouragement. We never put forth a high standard or expectation without a plan to support and encourage our students. We talk about growth as much as we talk about achievement and we celebrate the progress the students have made, whether it is their first step or their last and everywhere in between. Our teachers, coaches, and advisors take time to work with individual or small groups of students both in class and beyond the school day to make sure they can point out student progress and give precise and individualized feedback, while continually encouraging them as they pursue their goals.

Furthermore we build programs to support and encourage that excellence beyond the classroom. From our Biology teachers who host Biology "Boot Camp" each day after school the week leading up to Keystones, to our Trojan Learning Center which is staffed by multiple teachers every period and after school, to our Trojan Intervention Program that supports students whose behavior gets in the way of their academic abilities, to Link Crew that helps our students acclimate to the high school, we have embedded encouragement and support to help our students reach the expected excellence.

While outsiders may consider it a cliché, there is a genuine Culture of Excellence in everything we do at York Suburban High School. We are successful because we partner that with a Community of Encouragement that actively supports all our students and staff in their quest to be the best they can possibly be.